

Message Text

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1. (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE) SCOPE. THIS MESSAGE REPORTS ON OBSERVATIONS MADE BY THE AGOFFICER AND OTHER USLO OFFICERS DURING THE 30 DAYS ENDING AUGUST 13. COARSE GRAINS, MOSTLY CORN, PREDOMINATED IN THE AREAS TRAVELLED, FOLLOWED BY SWEET POTATOES AND COTTON. SORGHUMS (TALL AND COMBINE) AND MILLETS WERE IMPORTANT AND IN A FEW LOCALITIES PREDOMINANT. THE AGOFFICER TRAVELLED FROM SIAN TO SHANGHAI AUGUST 7-12 OBTAINING AN AERIAL VIEW OF THE SIAN BASIN; CAR TRIPS 40 KILOMETERS SOUTH AND 40 KOLOMETERS WEST OF SIAN; BY TRAIN EAST FROM SIAN TO CHISHAN; BY CAR 70 KILOMETERS NORTH OF CHENGCHOW TO HSINHSIANG AND DAYLIGHT RAIL TRAVEL KAIFENG-SHANGHAI. OTHER USLO OFFICERS OBSERVED PEKING-TAIAN (SHAN-TUNG) AUGUST 3-6; AND HARBIN, CHANGCHUN, SYENYANG, ANSHAN, DAIREN BY A COMBINATION OF RAIL AND AIR TRAVEL DURING THE LAST TWO WEEKS OF JULY; AND THE FARM BUREAU TOUR VISITED

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SHENYANG THE SECOND WEEK OF AUGUST (END LIMITED OFFICIAL USE).

2. (UNCLASSIFIED) CROP SUMMARY. IN THE NORTHEAST AND ON THE NORTH CHINA PLAIN COARSE GRAINS, ESPECIALLY CORN, APPEAR TO BE DOING VERY WELL, WITH PROSPECTS FOR EQUALLING AND MOST LIKELY EXCEEDING USDA'S AVERAGE YIELD ESTIMATES FOR

RECENT YEARS. AS THESE ARE THE IMPORTANT COARSE GRAIN PRODUCING AREAS, THE AGOFFICER BELIEVES THAT AN OPTIMISTIC OUTLOOK IS WARRANTED. THE COTTON OBSERVED IN SOUTH CENTRAL SHENSI, AND NORTHERN HONAN AND ANHWEI WAS VARIABLE AND ON BALANCE DID NOT APPEAR CAPABLE OF ATTAINING USDA'S YIELD ESTIMATES FOR RECENT YEARS. RICE ON THE NORTH CHINA PLAIN WAS LIMITED AND MOST OFTEN PLANTED WHERE SOIL AND WATER RESOURCES WERE GOOD. NOT SURPRISINGLY, THIS RICE LOOKED GOOD WITH THE EXCEPTION OF SOME PALENESS OF COLOR. FROM NANKING TO SHANGHAI WHERE RICE PREDOMINATES BOTH STAND AND COLOR WERE EXCELLENT, AS USUAL.

3. CORN. WITH THE EXCEPTIONS NOTED IN PARA 7, CORN OBSERVED WAS UNIFORM WITH GOOD COLOR. MOST OFTEN THE APPEARANCE OF CORN WAS SIGNIFICANTLY BETTER THAN OTHER CROPS IN THE SAME AREA, IMPLYING BETTER GENETIC PROGRESS IN CORN, HIGHER FERTILIZER RATES AND PERHAPS MORE ATTENTIVE CARE. A GUESSTIMATED ONE-THIRD OF THE CORN IN SHANSI, HONAN AND ANHWEI WAS EARLY INTERPLANTED IN WHEAT (APRIL). SOME HAD BEEN HARVESTED AND ALL SOON WILL BE. LATE CORN OR SEET POTATOES WERE GENERALLY PLANTED AFTER WHEAT HARVEST. IN THE NORTHEAST WHERE CORN IS EARLY PLANTED, PROSPECTS APPEAR VERY GOOD WITH UNIFORMITY, STAND, AND COLOR NEAR OPTIMUM.

4. COTTON. COTTON OBSERVED IN SHENSI, HONAN AND ANHWEI WAS EXTREMELY VARIABLE. A FEW VERY GOOD FIELDS WERE OBSERVED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IN NORTHERN HONAN AND SEVERAL MODERATELY GOOD FIELDS WERE SEEN IN SHENSI. HOWEVER, ON THE WHOLE COTTON EXHIBITED LITTLE UNIFORMITY WITHIN FIELDS AND FERTILIZER APPLICATIONS WERE MOST OFTEN SMALL TO NIL, JUDGING BY COLOR. MOST COTTON HAD MATURE BOLLS ON BOTTOM BRANCHES AND WAS STILL BLOOMING ON THE TOP BRANCHES. BETWEEN KAIFENG AND PANGPU A SUBSTANTIAL AMOUNT OF COTTON OBSERVED, AND PERHAPS THE MAJORITY WAS LESS THAN A FOOT AND A HALF TALL AND WILL NOT GET ANY TALLER. (END UNCLASSIFIED).

5. (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE) SIAN. THE CTS GUIDE IN EXPLAINING WHY PROVINCIAL AGRICULTURAL OFFICIALS WERE NOT AVAILABLE SAID, "THERE IS NO ONE THERE BUT A FEW CLERKS. EVERYONE IS OUT FIGHTING THE DROUGHT IN ORDER TO ASSURE A BUMPER AUTUMN HARVEST. THE SUMMER HARVEST FROM ALL PROVINCES, AUTONOMOUS REGIONS AND MUNICIPALITIES EXCEPT FOUR EXCEEDED THE 1977 HARVEST. TWO HAD THE SAME AS 1977 AND TWO, SHENSI AND SHANSI, HAD SMALLER SUMMER HARVESTS THAN IN 1977. IN CHINA IT IS NECESSARY TO SHOW AN INCREASE EVERY YEAR. THE OFFICIALS ARE UNDER GREAT PRESSURE TO MAKE UP THE SUMMER HARVEST DEFICIT WITH THE AUTUMN HARVEST." WHEN ASKED THE SOURCE OF THE INFORMATION ON PROVINCIAL SUMMER HARVESTS,

THE GUIDE SAID THAT HE HAD READ IT OR HEART IT ON THE RADIO,
HE DIDN'T REMEMBER WHICH. (END LIMITED OFFICIAL USE).

6. (UNCLASSIFIED) THE KAIFENG-CHIASHAN LEG WAS SUBSTANTIALLY
DIFFERENT FROM OTHER AREAS OBSERVED. WEATHER DATA INDICATED
THAT DROUGHT HAS PERSISTED ALONG THIS ROUTE THROUGHOUT
THE GROWING SEASON. THE DROUGHT IS CERTAINLY BROKEN. THE
CHENGCHOW-SHANGHAI TRIP WAS UNDER CLOUD COVER AND THERE
WAS AMPLE EVIDENCE OF GOOD, RECENT RAINS ALONG THE ROUTE.
ONE IS STRUCK BY THE POOR APPEARANCE OF CROPS, LOWER RATIO
OF LAND UTILIZATION, LESS LAND DEVELOPMENT AND A LOWER
POPULATION DENSITY. MOST OF THESE COMPARISONS REFLECT THE
FACT THAT THIS AREAS' NATURAL RESOURCES ARE SIMPLY NOT AS
GOOD AS OTHER AREAS VISITED. IT IS DIFFICULT TO SAY HOW
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MUCH DROUGHT MAY HAVE COMPOUNDED THE RELATIVELY LOWER
YIELDS ONE WOULD EXPECT IN THIS AREA. SINCE TALL SORGHUM
AND SWEET POTATOES WERE OFTEN THE PREDOMINANT CROPS, WITH
CORN COMPLETELY DISAPPEARING AT TIMES, ONE IS TEMPTED TO
GUESS THAT SEASONAL WEATHER VARIATION IS NOT THE MAJOR
PROBLEM. STILL, A FAIR AMOUNT OF STUNTED, SPINDLY CORN WAS
OBSERVED. THERE WAS SOME IMPROVEMENT BETWEEN PANGPU AND
CHIASHAN. BUT EVEN THAT SECTION MUST BE DESCRIBED AS POOR.

7. HOPEH-SHANTUNG. FAIR TO POOR CROP CONDITIONS WERE OBSERVED
IN SOUTHEAST HOPEH AND IN SHANTUNG FROM TECHOW SOUTH TO
ABOUT 30 KILOMETERS NORTH OF THE YELLOW RIVER. FROM TSINAN
TO TAIAN, CROPS LOOKED VERY GOOD IN CONTRAST TO THEIR
POOR APPEARANCE A YEAR EARLIER. THE PEKING-TIENTSIN REGION
APPEARS VERY GOOD. (END UNCLASSIFIED). WOODCOCK

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